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## Golden Steps for Youth (Part Two)

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Scriptures, in the more strict and proper sense of that term. But to show precisely what I mean by this weekly study of the Bible, I will describe a particular case. A young man with only such opportunities as are possessed by all, resolves to take this course. He selects the Epistle to the Ephesians for his first subject; he obtains such books and helps as he finds in his own family, or as he can obtain from a religious friend, or procure from a Sabbath-school library. It is not too much to suppose that he will have a sacred Atlas, some Commentary, and probably a Bible Dictionary. He should also have pen, ink, and paper; and thus provided, he sits down Sabbath morning to his work. He raises a short but heartfelt prayer to God that he will assist and bless him, and then commences his inquiries.

“The Epistle to the Ephesians I have supposed to be his subject. He sees that the first question evidently is, ‘*Who were the Ephesians?*’ He finds the city of Ephesus upon the map; and from the preface to the



Epistle contained in the commentary, or from any other source to which he can have access, he learns what sort of a city it was—what was the character of the inhabitants, and if possible, what condition the city was in at the time this letter was written. He next inquires in regard to the writer of this letter or Epistle, as it is called. It was Paul; and what did Paul know of the Ephesians? had he ever been there? or was he writing to strangers? To settle these points, so evidently important to a correct understanding of the letter, he examines the Acts of the Apostles, (in which an account of St. Paul's labors is contained,) to learn whether Paul went there, and if so, what happened while he was there. He finds that many interesting incidents occurred during Paul's visits, and his curiosity is excited to know whether these things will be alluded to in the letter; he also endeavors to ascertain where Paul was when he wrote the letter. After having thus determined everything relating to the circumstances of the case, he is



prepared to come to the Epistle itself, and enter with spirit and interest into an examination of its contents.

“ He first glances his eye cursorily through the chapters of the book, that he may take in at once a general view of its object and design—perhaps he makes out a brief list of the topics discussed, and thus has a distinct general idea of the whole before he enters into a minute examination of the parts. This minute examination he comes to at last—though perhaps the time devoted to the study for *two or three* Sabbaths is spent in the preparatory inquiries. If it is so, it is time well spent; for by it he is now prepared to enter with interest into the very soul and spirit of the letter. While he was ignorant of these points, his knowledge of the Epistle itself must have been very vague and superficial. Suppose I were now to introduce into this book a letter, and should begin at once, without saying by whom the letter was written, or to whom it was addressed. It would be preposterous. If I



wished to excite your interest, I should describe particularly the parties, and the circumstances which produced the letter originally. And yet how many Christians there are, who could not tell whether Paul's letter to the Ephesians was written before or after he went there, or where Titus was when Paul wrote to him, or for what special purpose he wrote ! )

“ This method of studying the Scriptures, which I have thus attempted to describe, and which I might illustrate by supposing many other cases, is not intended for one class alone ; not for the ignorant peculiarly, nor for the wise ; not for the rich, nor for the poor ; but for all. The solitary widow, in her lonely cottage among the distant mountains, with nothing but her simple Bible in her hand, by the light of her evening fire, may pursue this course of comparing Scripture with Scripture, and entering into the spirit of sacred story, throwing herself back to ancient times, and thus preparing herself to grasp more completely, and to feel more



vividly the moral lessons which the Bible is mainly intended to teach. And the most cultivated scholar may pursue this course in his quiet study, surrounded by all the helps to a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures which learning can produce or wealth obtain.

"I hope the specimens I have given are sufficient to convey to my readers the general idea I have in view, when I speak of *studying* the Bible, in contradistinction from the mere cursory reading of it, which is so common among Christians.

"Select some subject upon which a good deal of information may be found in various parts of the Bible, and make it your object to bring together into one view all that the Bible says upon that subject. Take for instance the life of the Apostle Peter. Suppose you make it your business on one Sabbath, with the help of a brother, or sister, or any other friend who will unite with you in the work, to obtain all the information which the Bible gives in regard to him. By the help of the Concordance you find all the



places in which he is mentioned—you compare the various accounts in the Four Gospels; see in what they agree and in what they differ. After following down his history as far as the Evangelists bring it, you take up the book of the Acts, and go through that for information in regard to this Apostle, omitting those parts which relate to other subjects. In this way you become fully acquainted with his character and history; you understand it as a whole.

“*Jerusalem* is another good subject, and the examination would afford scope for the exercise of the faculties of the highest minds for many Sabbaths: find when the city is first named, and from the manner in which it is mentioned, and the circumstances connected with the earliest accounts of it, ascertain what sort of a city it was at that time. Then follow its history down; notice the changes as they occur; understand every revolution, examine the circumstances of every battle and siege of which it is the scene, and thus become acquainted with its



whole story down to the time when the sacred narration leaves it. To do this well, will require patient and careful investigation. You cannot do it as you can read a chapter, carelessly and with an unconcerned and uninterested mind; you must, if you would succeed in such an investigation, engage in it *in earnest*. And that is the very advantage of such a method of study; it breaks up effectually that habit of listless, dull, inattentive reading of the Bible which so extensively prevails.

"You may take the subject of the *Sabbath*; examine the circumstances of its first appointment, and then follow its history down, so far as it is given in the Bible, to the last Sabbath alluded to on the sacred pages.

"The variety of topics which might profitably be studied in this way is vastly greater than would at first be supposed. There are a great number of biographical and geographical topics—a great number which relate to manners, and customs, and sacred in-



structions. In fact, the whole Bible may be analyzed in this way, and its various contents brought before the mind in new aspects, and with a freshness and vividness which, in the mere repeated reading of the Scriptures in regular course, can never be seen."\*

In connection with this general subject, I would make a few suggestions to the young, in regard to those who differ from them on religious doctrines. That there should be a diversity of opinions in respect to a subject so purely speculative as religion, should not be a matter of surprise. Indeed, when the disparity in strength of mind, intelligence, discrimination, early instruction, and educational bias, which prevails in society, is taken into consideration, it would be singular if religious differences did not exist. Our civil institutions and laws, guaranteeing unto every individual unlimited freedom of opinion, encourage investigations which tend, for a definite period at least, to produce these differences.

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\* Abbott's Young Christian.



There are not a few who view with alarm the multiplicity of religious doctrines and sects, which prevails in our day. They are disposed to look upon it as an imperfection in our institutions, or as a token of the degeneracy of our age; and they fear that the most disastrous consequences will flow from it to Christianity. I cannot but view these apprehensions as groundless. They seem to grow out of a singular want of knowledge of the organism of the human mind. Moreover, they indicate an erroneous conception of the inherent power of truth; and a marvellous lack of confidence in the self-sustaining capacity of the Christian religion. If Christianity cannot exist and progress among men without chaining the human mind in bondage, stifling all research, and forbidding a critical investigation of doctrines put forth in its name, then it must at length become extinct. Men will and must think, reason, investigate, on religious subjects, as well as other topics, whatever result may follow. I cherish, however, none of these fears. The multiplicity



of denominations, and the diversity of opinions, can work no serious injury to religion. The discussions, researches, and critical examinations, which necessarily grow out of this state of things, will but sift error from truth; and result, ultimately, in laying broader and deeper the foundations of pure Christianity in human society; bringing out its highest excellencies and beauties to the admiration of men, and elevating it far above the poisoned arrows of scepticism. It is the errors engrafted on Christianity, in dark and ignorant ages, that have given the infidel all his weapons of attack. When these errors shall at length all be detected and expunged by candid research, and faithful investigation, the shafts of the sceptic will fall harmless at the base of the graceful and glorious temple of Christ's religion. In the words of John Milton—"Though all the winds of doctrine were let loose to play upon the earth, so truth be in the field, we do injuriously \* \* \* to misdoubt her strength. Let her and falsehood grapple. Who ever knew truth put



to the worse in a free and open encounter?"

What line of conduct should the young adopt towards those who differ from them on religious doctrines?

In the first place, let it never be forgotten that others have the same civil, moral, and religious right to differ in sentiment from you, that you have from them. This right is recognized by our republican government, and is sanctioned by the gospel. One of the directions of the Saviour is, that men should "search the Scriptures."\* There would be no propriety in this commandment, had not individuals the right to understand the teachings of the Scriptures, according to their best judgment, with the light they possess. (Moreover, Protestantism allows among its first principles, the legitimate right of individual interpretation of the Scriptures, and private judgment in religious matters.) It was for this right that Luther and Zuinglius, Melancthon and Calvin, and all the Refor-

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\* John v. 39.



mers, contended against the arrogant assumption of the Roman Church. That Church insisted that the people were not to understand the Scriptures for themselves, but were bound to receive, unquestioned, such interpretations as the bishop or priest should teach them. (Whoever deny freedom of opinion, in regard to religion, to all men, clearly violate the spirit of the gospel, the recognized rights conferred by the Protestant religion, and the sanctions of our political institutions.)

Admitting then, as you must, the privilege of others to differ from you in religious sentiment, you should not allow that difference to be a matter of offence. It should be no disparagement in your view, nor lessen them in your estimation. However great you may consider the errors of your neighbors, if you are satisfied they are *sincere*, you should respect them for their sincerity! Hypocrisy, in every form, should be denounced. Those who profess to believe what they do not, or to be what they are not—who assume the



Christian name when they are in fact, but bitter and narrow-minded bigots—are only worthy to be heartily despised.

Let me caution the young, also, against a spirit of exclusiveness. In our age and country, a religious aristocracy is no more to be acknowledged than a political. (All denominations stand on an *equality*, in their rights and privileges, and in the estimation in which they are to be held as public bodies.) No sect can put on airs, and assume to lord it over others, in any respect whatever, without subjecting itself to the severest censure. Among the rights belonging equally to all, is the Christian name. Every denomination which receives the Scriptures as the inspired word of God, and believes in Jesus Christ, as the Son of God and the Saviour of men, is justly entitled to the name of *Christian*, and to be acknowledged and treated as such. This is the only test laid down in the New Testament, as a careful examination will satisfy the candid mind.

For any one sect to attempt to monopolize



the Christian name, and assume that all the piety, godliness, and virtue in the land, is to be found in its borders alone, is to place itself in a most ridiculous position. A pretence so arrogant and groundless, in our enlightened day, can have no other effect than to excite a smile of pity on the countenance of sincere and candid Christians. I would have the young give no countenance to these pretensions; but seek to attain to higher and nobler principles. Let them place sectarian bitterness and prejudice beneath their feet, and imbibe enough of the Christian spirit to acknowledge freely, that, in all denominations, good and pious people can be found.

In estimating those of other views, the young should avoid denouncing a whole denomination, and condemning their doctrines as demoralizing, because some corrupt men may have been found in their midst. If this rule of judging was generally adopted, where is there a class of Christians which could stand? Were there not among the chosen twelve of our Saviour, a Judas to



betray him, and a Peter to deny him with oaths? Shall we, therefore, insist that Christianity is false and corrupting? There are few sects in the land, which have not had both clergymen and church-members guilty of the most corrupt practices. Are we to conclude from this, that the doctrines of those who have had these unworthy members, are false and licentious? Who are willing to adopt this test? A denomination cannot consistently apply a test to others which they are not willing to abide by themselves.

Candor will lead all upright minds to acknowledge that corrupt men will find their way into every sect, and that it is manifestly wrong to judge of the whole body by this class. To decide of the practical tendencies of different and conflicting doctrines, seek to understand their effect on the great mass of those who receive them. Do they influence them to honesty, industry, benevolence and neighborly kindness? Do they inspire respect for the rights and interest of fellow-beings? Do they open the ear to the cry



of poverty and want? Do they lead to a love supreme to God, and to our neighbor as ourselves? These are the legitimate fruits of Christianity. Where they abound, you need not doubt the spirit of Christ prevails, and that the truths of his gospel are in the midst of such a people.

I would exhort the young to respect religion, in whatever form they find it, and to have a high and just regard for the rights and feelings of professing Christians of every class. In this, as in all things else, be governed by the Redeemer's golden rule—"All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them."

Amid the multiplicity of sects and doctrines, let every youth search for religious truth, as the "pearl of great price!" Be careful that your researches are in the right direction—not downward to the dark and mysterious of past and ignorant ages, but upward to the bright, the simple, and glorious. Ever seek for expansive and enlightened conceptions of God, his character and pur-



poses—of Christ, his gospel and its results—of man, his nature, his high relationship, his duty and destiny. The more elevated and comprehensive your views on these subjects, the more exalted will be your feelings and principles of action; and the better will you be prepared to live a life of purity and usefulness, and to die triumphing in the brightest and sweetest hopes of immortal light and happiness.

In concluding this subject, I would call attention to the following suggestions of several able writers, in regard to Religion and its influence on its possessors :—

“In the great and universal concern of religion, both sexes, and all ranks are equally interested. The truly catholic spirit of Christianity accommodates itself, with an astonishing condescension, to the circumstances of the whole human race. It rejects none on account of their pecuniary wants, their personal infirmities, or their intellectual deficiencies. No superiority of parts is the least recommendation, nor is any depression of fortune



the smallest objection. (None are too wise to be excused from performing the duties of religion, nor are any too poor to be excluded from the consolations of its promises.)

“If we admire the wisdom of God in having furnished different degrees of intelligence, so exactly adapted to their different conditions, and in having fitted every part of this stupendous work, not only to serve its own immediate purpose, but also to contribute to the beauty and perfection of the whole; how much more ought we to adore that goodness which has perfected the divine plan, by appointing one wide and comprehensive means of salvation: a salvation which all are invited to partake; by a means which all are capable of using; which nothing but voluntary blindness can prevent our comprehending, and nothing but wilful error can hinder us from embracing.

“The muses are coy, and will only be wooed and won by some highly-favored suitors. The sciences are lofty, and will not stoop to the reach of ordinary capacities. But ‘wisdom



(by which the royal preacher means piety) is a loving spirit; she is easily seen of them that love her, and found of all such as seek her.' Nay, she is so accessible and condescending, 'that she preventeth them that desire her, making herself first known unto them.'

"We are told by the same animated writer, 'that wisdom is the breath of the power of God.' How infinitely superior in grandeur and sublimity, is this description to the origin of the *wisdom* of the heathens, as described by their poets and mythologists! In the exalted strains of the Hebrew poetry, we read, that 'wisdom is the brightness of the everlasting light, the unspotted mirror of the power of God, and the image of his goodness.'

"The philosophical author of 'The Defence of Learning,' observes, that knowledge has something of venom and malignity in it, when taken without its proper corrective; and what that is, the inspired St. Paul teaches us, by placing it as the immediate antidote—



‘Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.’ Perhaps it is the vanity of human wisdom, unchastised by this correcting principle, which has made so many infidels. It may proceed from the arrogance of a self-sufficient pride, that some philosophers disdain to acknowledge their belief in a Being who has judged proper to conceal from them the infinite wisdom of his counsels; who (to borrow the lofty language of the man of Uz) refused to consult them when he laid the foundations of the earth, when he shut up the sea with doors, and made the clouds the garment thereof.

“A man must be an infidel either from pride, prejudice, or bad education; he cannot be one unawares, or by surprise; for infidelity is not occasioned by sudden impulse or violent temptation. He may be hurried by some vehement desire into an immoral action, at which he will blush in his cooler moments, and which he will lament as the sad effect of a spirit unsubdued by religion; but infidelity is a calm, considerate act, which cannot plead



the weakness of the heart, or the seduction of the senses. Even good men frequently fail in their duty through the infirmities of nature and the allurements of the world; but the infidel errs on a plan, on a settled and deliberate principle.

“But though the minds of men are sometimes fatally infected with this disease, either through unhappy prepossession, or some of the other causes above-mentioned, yet I am unwilling to believe that there is in nature so monstrously incongruous a being as a *female* infidel. The least reflection on the temper, the character, and the education of women, makes the mind revolt with horror from an idea so improbable and so unnatural.

“May I be allowed to observe that, in general, the minds of girls seem more aptly prepared in their early youth for the reception of serious impressions than those of the other sex, and that their less exposed situations in more advanced life qualify them better for the preservation of them! The daughters (of good parents I mean) are often more care-



fully instructed in their religious duties than the sons, and this from a variety of causes. They are not so soon sent from under the paternal eye into the bustle of the world, and so early exposed to the contagion of bad example: their hearts are naturally more flexible, soft, and liable to any kind of impression the forming hand may stamp on them; and, lastly, as they do not receive the same classical education with boys, their feeble minds are not obliged at once to receive and separate the precepts of Christianity, and the documents of pagan philosophy. The necessity of doing this perhaps somewhat weakens the serious impressions of young men, at least till the understanding is formed; and confuses their ideas of piety, by mixing them with so much heterogeneous matter. They only casually read, or hear read, the Scriptures of truth, while they are obliged to learn by heart, construe, and repeat, the poetical fables of the less than human gods of the ancients. And, as the excellent author of 'The Internal Evidence of the Christian



Religion' observes, 'Nothing has so much contributed to corrupt the true spirit of the Christian institution, as that partiality which we contract, in our earliest education, for the manners of pagan antiquity.'

"Girls, therefore, who do *not* contract this early partiality, ought to have a clearer notion of their religious duties: they are not obliged, at an age when the judgment is so weak, to distinguish between the doctrines of Zeno, of Epicurus, and of Christ; and to embarrass their minds with the various morals, which were taught in the Porch, in the Academy, and on the Mount.

"It is presumed that these remarks cannot possibly be so misunderstood, as to be construed into the least disrespect to literature, or a want of the highest reverence for a learned education, the basis of all elegant knowledge: they are only intended, with all proper deference, to point out to young women that, however inferior their advantages of acquiring a knowledge of the belles-lettres are to those of the other sex, yet it depends



on themselves not to be surpassed in this most important of all studies, for which their abilities are equal, and their opportunities perhaps greater.

“But the mere exemption from infidelity is so small a part of the religious character, that I hope no one will attempt to claim any merit from this negative sort of goodness, or value herself merely for not being the very worst thing she possibly can be. Let no mistaken girl fancy she gives a proof of her wit by her want of piety, or that a contempt of things serious and sacred will exalt her understanding, or raise her character even in the opinion of the most avowed male infidels. For one may venture to affirm, that with all their profligate ideas, both of women and religion, neither Bolingbroke, Wharton, Buckingham, or even Lord Chesterfield himself, would have esteemed a woman the more for her being irreligious.

“With whatever ridicule a polite free-thinker may affect to treat religion himself, he will think it necessary his wife should



entertain different notions of it. He may pretend to despise it as a matter of opinion, depending on creeds and systems; but, if he is a man of sense, he will know the value of it as a governing principle, which is to influence her conduct and direct her action. If he sees her unaffectedly sincere in the practice of her religious duties, it will be a secret pledge to him that she will be equally exact in fulfilling the conjugal; for he can have no reasonable dependence on her attachment to *him*, if he has no opinion of her fidelity to God; for she who neglects first duties, gives but an indifferent proof of her disposition to fill up inferior ones; and how can a man of any understanding (whatever his own religious professions may be) trust that woman with the cares of his family, and the education of his children, who wants herself the best incentive to a virtuous life, the belief that she is an accountable creature, and the reflection that she has an immortal soul?

“Cicero spoke it as the highest commendation of Cato’s character, that he embraced



philosophy, not for the sake of *disputing* like a philosopher, but of *living* like one. The chief purpose of Christian knowledge is to promote the great end of a Christian life. Every rational woman should, no doubt, be able to give a reason of the hope that is in her; but this knowledge is best acquired, and the duties consequent on it best performed, by reading books of plain piety and practical devotion, and not by entering into the endless feuds, and engaging in the unprofitable contentions of partial controversialists. Nothing is more unamiable than the narrow spirit of party zeal, nor more disgusting than to hear a woman deal out judgments, and denounce vengeance, against any one who happens to differ from her in some opinion, perhaps of no real importance, and which, it is probable, she may be just as wrong in rejecting, as the object of her censure is in embracing. A furious and unmerciful female bigot wanders as far beyond the limits prescribed to her sex, as a Thalestris or a Joan d'Arc. Violent debate has made



as few converts as the sword;—and both these instruments are particularly unbecoming when wielded by a female hand.

“ But, though no one will be frightened out of their opinions, yet they may be persuaded out of them; they may be touched by the affecting earnestness of serious conversation, and allured by the attractive beauty of a consistently serious life. And while a young woman ought to dread the name of a wrangling polemic, it is her duty to aspire after the honourable character of a sincere Christian. But this dignified character she can by no means deserve, if she is ever afraid to avow her principles, or ashamed to defend them. A profligate, who makes it a point to ridicule everything which comes under the appearance of formal instruction, will be disconcerted at the spirited, yet modest rebuke of a pious young woman. But there is as much efficacy in the manner of reproving profaneness, as in the words. If she corrects it with moroseness, she defeats the effect of her remedy by her unskilful



manner of administering it. If, on the other hand, she affects to defend the insulted cause of God in a faint tone of voice, and studied ambiguity of phrase, or with an air of levity, and a certain expression of pleasure in her eyes, which proves she is secretly delighted with what she pretends to censure, she injures religion much more than he did who publicly profaned it; for she plainly indicates, either that she does not believe or respect what she professes. The other attacked it as an open foe; she betrays it as a false friend. No one pays any regard to the opinion of an avowed enemy; but the desertion or treachery of a professed friend is dangerous indeed!"

"A desire after happiness is inseparable from the human mind. It is the natural and healthy craving of our spirit; an appetite which we have neither will nor power to destroy, and for which all mankind are busily employed in making provision. This is as natural, as for birds to fly, or fishes to swim. For this the scholar and the philoso-



pher, who think it consists in knowledge, pore over their books and their apparatus, light the midnight lamp, and keep frequent vigils, when the world around them is asleep. For this the warrior, who thinks that happiness is inseparably united with fame, pursues that bubble through the gory field of conflict, and is as lavish of his life, as if it were not worth a soldier's pay. The worldling, with whom happiness and *wealth* are kindred terms, worships daily at the shrine of Mammon, and offers earnest prayers for the golden shower. The voluptuary gratifies every craving sense, rejoices in the midnight revel, renders himself vile, and yet tells you he is in the chase of happiness. The ambitious man, conceiving that the great desideratum blossoms on the sceptre, and hangs in rich clusters from the throne, consumes one half of his life, and embitters the other half, in climbing the giddy elevation of royalty. All these, however, have confessed their disappointment; and have retired from the stage exclaiming, in reference to happiness, what



Brutus, just before he stabbed himself, did in reference to virtue, 'I have pursued thee everywhere, and found thee nothing but a name.' This, however, is a mistake; for both virtue and happiness are glorious realities, and if they are not found, it is merely because they are not sought from the right sources.

"1. That religion is pleasure, will appear, if you consider what part of our nature it more particularly employs and gratifies.

"It is not the gratification of the *senses*, or of the animal part of our nature, but a provision for the *immaterial and immortal mind*. The mind of man is an image not only of God's spirituality, but of his infinity. It is not like the senses, limited to this or that kind of object; as the sight intermeddles not with that which affects the smell; but with an universal superintendence, it arbitrates upon, and takes them all in. It is, as I may say, an ocean, into which all the little rivulets of sensation, both external and internal, discharge themselves. Now this is that part of



man to which the exercises of religion properly belong. The pleasures of the understanding, in the contemplation of truth, have been sometimes so great, so intense, so engrossing of all the powers of the soul, that there has been no room left for any other kind of pleasure. How short of this are the delights of the epicure! How vastly disproportionate are the pleasures of the eating, and of the thinking man! Indeed, says Dr. South, as different as the silence of an Archimedes in the study of a problem, and the stillness of a swine at her wash. Nothing is comparable to the pleasures of mind; these are enjoyed by the spirits above, by Jesus Christ, and the great and blessed God.

“Think what objects religion brings before the mind, as the sources of its pleasure: no less than the great God himself, and that both in his nature and in his works. For the eye of religion, like that of the eagle, directs itself chiefly to the sun, to a glory that neither admits of a superior nor an equal. The mind is conversant, in the exercises of



piety, with all the most stupendous events that have ever occurred in the history of the universe, or that ever will transpire till the close of time. The creation of the world; its government by a universal Providence; its redemption by the death of Christ; its conversion by the power of the Holy Ghost; the immortality of the soul; the resurrection of the body; the certainty of an eternal existence; the secrets of the unseen state; subjects, all of them of the loftiest and sublimest kind, which have engaged the inquiries of the profoundest intellects, are the matter of contemplation to real piety. What topics are these for our reason, under the guidance of religion, to study: what an ocean to swim in, what a heaven to soar in: what heights to measure, what depths to fathom. Here are subjects, which, from their infinite vastness, must be ever new, and ever fresh; which can be never laid aside as dry or empty. If novelty is the parent of pleasure, here it may be found; for although the subject itself is the same, some new view of it,



some fresh discovery of its wonders, is ever bursting upon the mind of the devout and attentive inquirer after truth.

“How then can religion be otherwise than pleasant, when it is the exercise of the noble faculties of the mind, upon the sublimest topics of mental investigation; the voluntary, excursive, endless pursuits of the human understanding in the region of eternal truth. Never was there a more interesting or important inquiry than that proposed by Pilate to the illustrious Prisoner at his bar; and if the latter thought it not proper to answer it, it was not to show that the question was insignificant, but to condemn the light and flippant manner in which a subject so important was taken up. Religion can answer the question, and with an ecstasy greater than that of the ancient Mathematician, exclaims, ‘I have found it: I have found it.’ The Bible is not only true, but TRUTH. It contains that which deserves this sublime emphasis. It settles the disputes of ages, and of philosophers, and makes known what



is truth, and where it is to be found. It brings us from amongst the quicksands and shelves, and rocks of skepticism, ignorance, and error, and shows us that goodly land, in quest of which myriads of minds have sailed, and multitudes have been wrecked; and religion is setting our foot on this shore, and dwelling in the region of eternal truth.

"2. That a religious life is pleasant, is evident from the nature of religion itself.

"Religion is a principle of *spiritual life* in the soul. Now all the exercises and acts of vitality are agreeable. To see, to hear, to taste, to walk, are all agreeable, because they are the voluntary energies of inward life. So religion, in all its duties, is the exercise of a living principle in the soul: it is a new spiritual existence. Piety is a spiritual *taste*. Hence it is said, 'If so be ye have *tasted* that the Lord is gracious.' No matter what the object of a taste is, the exercises of it are always agreeable. The painter goes with delight to his picture; the musician to his instrument; the sculptor to his bust; because



they have a *taste* for these pursuits. The same feeling of delight attends the Christian to the exercises of godliness: and this is his language, 'It is a good thing to give thanks, and to draw near to God. O how I love thy law! it is sweeter to my taste than honey. How amiable are thy tabernacles.' Religion, where it is real, is the natural element of a Christian; and every creature rejoices in its own appropriate sphere. If you consider true piety with disgust, as a hard, unnatural, involuntary thing, you are totally ignorant of its nature, entirely destitute of its influence, and no wonder you cannot attach to it the idea of pleasure: but viewing it as it ought to be viewed, in the light of a new nature, you will perceive that it admits of most exalted delight.

"3. Consider the miseries which it prevents.

"It does not, it is true, prevent sickness, poverty, or misfortune: it does not fence off from the wilderness of this world, a mystic enclosure, within which the ills of life never



intrude. No ; these things happen to all alike ; but how small a portion of human wretchedness flows from these sources, compared with that which arises from the dispositions of the heart. 'The mind is its own place, can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.' Men carry the springs of their happiness or misery in their own bosom. Hence it is said of the wicked, 'that they are like the troubled sea which cannot rest, which is never at peace, but continually casting up mire and dirt.' In contrast with which, it is affirmed that 'the work of righteousness is peace ; and that the good man shall be satisfied from himself.' Would you behold the misery entailed by *pride*, look at Haman ; by *covetousness*, look at Ahab ; by *malice*, look at Cain ; by *profaneness* and *sensuality*, united with the forebodings of a guilty conscience, look at Belshazzar ; by *envy*, and a consciousness of being rejected of God, look at Saul ; by *revenge*, look at Herodias writhing beneath the accusations of John, and thirsting for his blood ; by *apostasy*, look at



Judas. Religion would have prevented all this, and it will prevent similar misery in you. Harken to the confessions of the outcast in the land of his banishment; of the felon in his irons, and in his dungeon; of the prostitute expiring upon her bed of straw; of the malefactor at the gallows—'Wretched creature that I am, abhorred of men, accursed of God! To what have my crimes brought me!' Religion prevents all this: all that wretchedness which is the result of crime, is cut off by the influence of genuine piety. Misery prevented is happiness gained.

"4. Consider the consolations it imparts.

"Our world has been called, in the language of poetry, a vale of tears, and human life a bubble, raised from those tears, and inflated by sighs, which, after floating a little while, decked with a few gaudy colors, is touched by the hand of death, and dissolves. Poverty, disease, misfortune, unkindness, inconstancy, death, all assail the travellers as they journey onward to eternity through



this gloomy valley; and what is to comfort them but *religion*?

“The consolations of religion are neither few nor small; they arise in part from those things which we have already mentioned in this chapter; *i. e.* from the exercise of the understanding on the revealed truths of God’s word, from the impulses of the spiritual life within us, and from a reflection upon our spiritual privileges; but there are some others, which, though partially implied in these things, deserve a special enumeration and distinct consideration.

“*A good conscience*, which the wise man says is a perpetual feast, sustains a high place amongst the comforts of genuine piety. It is unquestionably true, that a man’s happiness is in the keeping of his conscience; all the sources of his felicity are under the command of this faculty. ‘A wounded spirit who can bear?’ A troubled conscience converts a paradise into a hell, for it is the flame of hell kindled on earth; but a quiet conscience would illuminate the horrors of



the deepest dungeon with the beams of heavenly day; the former has often rendered men like tormented fiends amidst an elysium of delights, while the latter has taught the songs of cherubim to martyrs in the prison or the flames.

“In addition to this, religion comforts the mind, with the assurance of an all-wise, all-pervading Providence, so minute in its superintendence and control, that not a sparrow falls to the ground without the knowledge of our heavenly Father: a superintendence which is excluded from no point of space, no moment of time, and overlooks not the meanest creature in existence. Nor is this all; for the Word of God assures the believer that ‘all things work together for good to them that love God, who are the called according to his purpose.’ Nothing that imagination could conceive, is more truly consolatory than this, to be assured that all things, however painful at the time, not excepting the failure of our favorite schemes, the disappointment of our fondest hopes, the



loss of our dearest comforts, shall be overruled by infinite wisdom for the promotion of our ultimate good. This is a spring of comfort whose waters never fail.

“Religion consoles also by making manifest some of the benefits of affliction, even at the time it is endured. It crucifies the world, mortifies sin, quickens prayer, extracts the balmy sweets of the promises, endears the Saviour; and, to crown all, it directs the mind to that glorious state, where the days of our mourning shall be ended: that happy country where God shall wipe every tear from our eyes, and there shall be no more sorrow or crying. Nothing so composes the mind, and helps it to bear the load of trouble which God may lay upon it, as the near prospect of its termination. Religion shows the weather-beaten mariner the haven of eternal repose, where no storms arise, and the sea is ever calm; it exhibits to the weary traveller the city of habitation, within whose walls he will find a pleasant home, rest from his labors, and friends to welcome his arrival; it dis-



closes to the wounded warrior his native country, where the alarms of war, and the dangers of conflict, will be no more encountered, but undisturbed peace forever reign. In that one word, HEAVEN, religion provides a balm for every wound, a cordial for every care.

“Here, then, is the pleasure of that wisdom which is from above; it is not only enjoyed in prosperity, but continues to refresh us, and most powerfully to refresh us, in adversity; a remark which will not apply to any other kind of pleasure.”\*

“In many persons, a seriousness and sense of awe overspread the imagination, whenever the idea of the Supreme Being is presented to their thoughts. This effect, which forms a considerable security against vice, is the consequence not so much of reflection as of habit; which habit being generated by the external expressions of reverence which we use ourselves, or observe in others, may be

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\* Christian Father's Present.



destroyed by causes opposite to these, and especially by that familiar levity with which some learn to speak of the Deity, of his attributes, providence, revelations or worship.

“God hath been pleased (no matter for what reason, although probably for this,) to forbid the vain mention of his name:—‘Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.’ Now the mention is *vain* when it is useless; and it is useless when it is neither likely nor intended to serve any good purpose; as when it flows from the lips idle and unmeaning, or is applied, on occasions inconsistent with any consideration of religion and devotion, to express our anger, our earnestness, our courage, or our mirth; or indeed when it is used at all, except in acts of religion, or in serious and seasonable discourse upon religious subjects.

“The prohibition of the third commandment is recognized by Christ in his sermon upon the mount; which sermon adverts to none but the moral parts of the Jewish law: ‘I say unto you, swear not at all: but let



your communication be Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.' The Jews probably interpreted the prohibition as restrained to the name JEHOVAH, the name which the Deity had appointed and appropriated to himself; Exod. vi. 3. The words of Christ extend the prohibition beyond the *name* of God, to everything associated with the idea:—'Swear not, neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is God's footstool; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King." Matt. v. 35.

"The offence of profane swearing is aggravated by the consideration, that in *it* duty and decency are sacrificed to the slenderest of temptations. Suppose the habit, either from affectation, or by negligence and inadvertency, to be already formed, it must always remain within the power of the most ordinary resolution to correct it: and it cannot, one would think, cost a great deal to relinquish the pleasure and honor which it confers. A concern for duty is in fact never



strong, when the exertion requisite to vanquish a habit founded in no antecedent propensity is thought too much or too painful.

“A contempt of positive duties, or rather of those duties for which the reason is not so plain as the command, indicates a disposition upon which the authority of revelation has obtained little influence. This remark is applicable to the offence of profane swearing, and describes, perhaps pretty exactly, the general character of those who are most addicted to it.

“Mockery and ridicule, when exercised upon the Scriptures, or even upon the places, persons, and forms set apart for the ministration of religion, fall within the meaning of the law which forbids the profanation of God’s name; especially as that law is extended by Christ’s interpretation. They are moreover inconsistent with a religious frame of mind: for as no one ever either feels himself disposed to pleasantry, or capable of being diverted with the pleasantry of others, upon matters in which he is deeply inter-



ested ; so a mind intent upon the acquisition of heaven rejects with indignation every attempt to entertain it with jests, calculated to degrade or deride subjects which it never recollects but with seriousness and anxiety. Nothing but stupidity, or the most frivolous disposition of thought, can make even the inconsiderate forget the supreme importance of everything which relates to the expectation of a future existence. Whilst the infidel mocks at the superstitions of the vulgar, insults over their credulous fears, their childish errors, or fantastic rites, it does not occur to him to observe, that the most preposterous device by which the weakest devotee ever believed he was securing the happiness of a future life, is more rational than unconcern about it. Upon this subject nothing is so absurd as indifference ; no folly so contemptible as thoughtlessness and levity.

“The knowledge of what is due to the solemnity of those interests, concerning which Revelation professes to inform and direct us, may teach even those who are least inclined



to respect the prejudices of mankind, to observe a decorum in the style and conduct of religious disquisitions, with the neglect of which many adversaries of Christianity are justly chargeable. Serious arguments are fair on all sides. Christianity is but ill defended by refusing audience or toleration to the objections of unbelievers. But whilst we would have freedom of inquiry restrained by no laws but those of decency, we are entitled to demand, on behalf of a religion which holds forth to mankind assurances of immortality, that its credit be assailed by no other weapons than those of sober discussion and legitimate reasoning;—that the truth or falsehood of Christianity be never made a topic of raillery, a theme for the exercise of wit or eloquence, or a subject of contention for literary fame and victory;—that the cause be tried upon its merits;—that all applications to the fancy, passions or prejudices of the reader, all attempts to preoccupy, ensnare, or perplex his judgment, by any art, influence. or impression whatsoever, extrinsic



to the proper grounds and evidence upon which his assent ought to proceed, be rejected from a question which involves in its determination the hopes, the virtue, and the repose of millions;—that the controversy be managed on both sides with sincerity; that is, that nothing be produced, in the writings of either, contrary to or beyond the writer's own knowledge and persuasion;—that objections and difficulties be proposed, from no other motive than an honest and serious desire to obtain satisfaction, or to communicate information which may promote the discovery and progress of truth;—that, in conformity with this design, everything be stated with integrity, with method, precision, and simplicity; and above all, that whatever is published in opposition to received and confessedly beneficial persuasions, be set forth under a form which is likely to invite inquiry and to meet examination. If with these moderate and equitable conditions be compared the manner in which hostilities have been waged against the Christian re-



ligion, not only the votaries of the prevailing faith, but every man who looks forward with anxiety to the destination of his being, will see much to blame and to complain of. By *one unbeliever*, all the follies which have adhered in a long course of dark and superstitious ages, to the popular creed, are assumed as so many doctrines of Christ and his Apostles, for the purpose of subverting the whole system by the absurdities which it is *thus* represented to contain. By *another*, the ignorance and vices of the sacerdotal order, their mutual dissensions and persecutions, their usurpations and encroachments upon the intellectual liberty and civil rights of mankind, have been displayed with no small triumph and invective; not so much to guard the Christian laity against a repetition of the same injuries (which is the only proper use to be made of the most flagrant examples of the past,) as to prepare the way for an insinuation, that the religion itself is nothing but a profitable fable, imposed upon the fears and credulity of the multitude, and upheld



by the frauds and influence of an interested and crafty priesthood. And yet, how remotely is the character of the clergy connected with the truth of Christianity! What, after all, do the most disgraceful pages of ecclesiastical history prove, but that the passions of our common nature are not altered or excluded by distinctions of name, and that the characters of men are formed much more by the temptations than the duties of their profession? A *third* finds delight in collecting and repeating accounts of wars and massacres, of tumults and insurrections, excited in almost every age of the Christian era by religious zeal; as though the vices of Christians were parts of Christianity; intolerance and extirpation precepts of the Gospel; or as if its spirit could be judged of from the counsels of princes, the intrigues of statesmen, the pretences of malice and ambition, or the unauthorized cruelty of some gloomy and virulent superstition. By a *fourth*, the succession and variety of popular religions; the vicissitudes with which sects and tenets have



flourished and decayed; the zeal with which they were once supported, the negligence with which they are now remembered; the little share which reason and argument appear to have had in framing the creed, or regulating the religious conduct of the multitude; the indifference and submission with which the religion of the state is generally received by the common people; the caprice and vehemence with which it is sometimes opposed; the frenzy with which men have been brought to contend for opinions and ceremonies, of which they knew neither the proof, the meaning, nor the original: lastly, the equal and undoubting confidence with which we hear the doctrines of Christ or of Confucius, the law of Moses or of Mahomet, the Bible, the Koran, or the Shaster, maintained or anathematized, taught or abjured, revered or derided, according as we live on this or on that side of a river; keep within or step over the boundaries of a state; or even in the same country, and by the same people, so often as the event of a battle, or



the issue of a negotiation, delivers them to the dominion of a new master;—points, we say, of this sort are exhibited to the public attention, as so many arguments against the *truth* of the Christian religion;—and with success. For these topics being brought together, and set off with some aggravation of circumstances, and with a vivacity of style and description familiar enough to the writings and conversation of free-thinkers, insensibly lead the imagination into a habit of classing Christianity with the delusions that have taken possession, by turns, of the public belief; and of regarding it as, what the scoffers of our faith represent it to be, *the superstition of the day*. But is this to deal honestly by the subject, or with the world? May not the same things be said, may not the same prejudices be excited by these representations, whether Christianity be true or false, or by whatever proofs its truth be attested? May not truth as well as falsehood be taken upon credit? May not a religion be founded upon evidence accessible and



satisfactory to every mind competent to the inquiry, which yet, by the greatest part of its professors, is received upon authority?

“But if the *matter* of these objections be reprehensible, as calculated to produce an effect upon the reader beyond what their real weight and place in the argument deserve, still more shall we discover of management and disingenuousness in the *form* under which they are dispersed among the public. Infidelity is served up in every shape that is likely to allure, surprise, or beguile the imagination; in a fable, a tale, a novel, a poem; in interspersed and broken hints, remote and oblique surmises; in books of travels, of philosophy, of natural history; in a word, in any form rather than the right one, that of a professed and regular disquisition. And because the coarse buffoonery and broad laugh of the old and rude adversaries of the Christian faith would offend the taste, perhaps, rather than the virtue, of this cultivated age, a graver irony, a more skilful and delicate banter is substituted in its place.



An eloquent historian, beside his more direct, and therefore fairer, attacks upon the credibility of Evangelic story, has contrived to weave into his narration one continued sneer upon the cause of Christianity, and upon the writings and characters of its ancient patrons. The knowledge which this author possesses of the frame and conduct of the human mind must have led him to observe, that such attacks do their execution without inquiry. Who can refute a *sneer*? Who can compute the number, much less, one by one, scrutinize the justice of those disparaging insinuations which crowd the pages of this elaborate history? What reader suspends his curiosity, or calls off his attention from the principal narrative, to examine references, to search into the foundation, or to weigh the reason, propriety, and force of every transient sarcasm and sly allusion, by which the Christian testimony is depreciated and traduced; and by which, nevertheless, he may find his persuasion afterwards unsettled and perplexed?"



“But the enemies of Christianity have pursued her with poisoned arrows. Obscenity itself is made the vehicle of infidelity. The fondness for ridicule is almost universal; and ridicule to many minds is never so irresistible as when seasoned with obscenity, and employed upon religion. But in proportion as these noxious principles take hold of the imagination, they infatuate the judgment; for trains of ludicrous and unchaste associations, adhering to every sentiment and mention of religion, render the mind indisposed to receive either conviction from its evidence, or impressions from its authority. And this effect, being exerted upon the sensitive part of our frame, is altogether independent of argument, proof, or reason; is as formidable to a true religion as to a false one; to a well-grounded faith as to a chimerical mythology, or fabulous tradition. Neither, let it be observed, is the crime or danger less, because impure ideas are exhibited under a veil, in covert and chastised language.”



## LECTURE VI.

### On Marriage.

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"Have ye not read that he which made them at the beginning, made them male and female? And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh. Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What, therefore, God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."—Matt. xix. 4, 5, 6.  
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T is not impossible that some may doubt the propriety of introducing into the pulpit the subject which will claim our attention this evening. Marriage is a topic of so much every-day conversation; it is so often and habitually treated as a light and trivial affair—forming as it does, in every circle of society, a standing matter for jest and laughter, for tattle and gossip—that many are surprised at the idea



of treating it in a thoughtful and serious manner. So far from this being an objection, it is an urgent reason for presenting this subject under the sedate influences of this place and occasion. I would bring out the important event of Marriage, from amid the frivolity with which it is usually associated, and present it in its real and true aspect—as a topic demanding the most sober and mature consideration.

Marriage is a divine covenant, instituted by God himself.—“And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make him a help-meet for him.” From the body of Adam, woman was formed, and given to him as a companion, a wife. “And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.” The Saviour also, in the language of the text, unqualifiedly sanctions the marriage covenant, and adopts



it as one of the sacred institutions of the Christian dispensation.

The marriage relation is vitally connected with the highest interests of human society. It restrains, purifies, elevates mankind. It is the great preserver of morality and religion; and forms one of the most effective of the influences which prevent the world from being deluged with licentiousness, and every loathsome form of evil. All the comforts of domestic life—the sacred and deathless ties of the family circle—the dear delights, the cherished associations, the hallowed memories of the paternal fireside—spring directly from the marriage state. It is this alone that gives us the home of our childhood, the love, the protection, the wise counsel and advice of parents. It is this that affords the sacred retreat in mature days, where, from the strifes, and cares, and bitter disappointments of the business mart, the husband and father can retire, and amid the soothing attentions and the unbought love of wife and children, renew his strength and



courage for future struggles. It is this that furnishes the aged patriarch and the venerable matron, with the safe covert, the quiet refuge, the warm, snug corner, where they can pass the winter of life, surrounded by children and children's children, who delight to rise up and do them reverence, and minister to their comforts.

"Domestic happiness! thou only bliss  
Of paradise that hath survived the fall!

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Thou art the nurse of virtue; in thine arms  
She smiles, appearing, as in truth she is,  
Heaven-born, and destined to the skies again."

Among all nations, wherever the marriage tie is the most generally formed, and held the most sacred, there woman holds the highest position and obtains her truest estimation—there civilization and refinement—there truth, purity, fidelity, and all the virtues and graces that can adorn and elevate humanity, bloom in vigorous luxuriance. And in the same degree that this sacred relationship is neglected, and its obligations disregarded, in any



nation, do we find woman degraded, and ignorance, barbarism, sensuality and vice, in every shape, prevailing and preying on the vitals of society.

In view of these considerations, it assuredly cannot be deemed improper, in addressing the young, to call their especial attention to a subject so interesting as Marriage, and one so vitally connected with all that is valuable and sacred. Indeed any series of discourses designed to counsel them, which should omit this all-important topic, would seem to be deficient in one of the first essentials of salutary admonition.

In presenting this subject to the consideration of the youthful, I would admonish them against thoughtless engagements, and hasty marriages. A heedlessness in these matters, is fraught with dangerous consequences. Matrimony is not to be viewed as a mere joke, or frolic, to be engaged in at any moment, without forethought or preparation. It is the first great step, the most momentous event, in the life of a young couple. Their position,



their circumstances, their habits, their manner of occupying time, their prospects, all undergo an almost total change at this important era. It will be to them a source of prosperity, of peace, of the highest enjoyments, or of adversity, misfortune, wrangling, and bitter wretchedness—as they do, or do not, exercise discretion and judgment in forming the connection. No thoughtful young man, no prudent young woman, will enter into an engagement of marriage, much less consummate the act, without viewing it in all its bearings. They will maturely weigh the consequences which follow, and seriously reflect upon the new scenes, duties, responsibilities, and labors, to which it leads.

I know that to many, perhaps most of the young, the whole matter of matrimony is viewed in a light so romantic—its pathway seeming to be so in the midst of rosy clouds, so fanned by ambrosial gales, so intermixed with flowery meads and rural bowers, the songs of birds and murmuring streams—that it is exceedingly difficult for them to follow a



train of sober thought on the subject. It is important, however, that they should seek to rise above these deceptive conceptions, and take such a view of this matter, as shall approach the reality, and save them from the disappointment which so often follows this consummation of their fondest dreams.

The selection of a companion for life is a transaction altogether more serious than the young appear generally to view it. They too often forget, that from all the world, they are choosing one to walk with them in closest intimacy, during all their days; and that it depends on the wisdom of their choice, whether the journey of life shall be peaceful and pleasant, or sad and wretched. It has passed into a species of proverb, that the selection of a wife or a husband, is like purchasing a ticket in a lottery—no one knows whether a prize or a blank will be drawn. There is too much truth in this saying, as selections of husbands and wives are often made. When the young are governed in such things, by fancy rather than judgment—when they are



carried away captives by some outward, worthless attraction, rather than by solid and useful qualities—their success will, indeed, depend on blind chance. But there is no necessity for so great a hazard. A young man, or a young woman, may positively know beforehand, whether they will draw a prize or a blank. In fact, they may select the *prizes* without any mistake, and let the *blanks* go for what they are worth. Let them exercise but an ordinary degree of judgment, sound discrimination and good sense, and there will be no danger of drawing a blank.

When a young man has attained to a suitable age, and is engaged in some honest and useful occupation, whereby he is in possession of means to maintain a family, it then becomes not only a privilege, but a *duty*, to select a wife, to be the sharer of his joys and his sorrows. In making this choice, he should act calmly, deliberately, and thoughtfully. He should bear in mind that he is selecting, not for a day, or a year, but for all life. The object of his affections should be one, who



will live pleasantly with him, and make him happy, not for a few months only, but during long years to come, when the romance of marriage shall have been succeeded by the cares and struggles of maturer life. She should be one of whom he can say, in the words of the poet:—

“Oft as clouds my path o’erspread,  
Doubtful where my steps should tread,  
She, with judgment’s steady ray,  
Marks and smooths the better way.”

There is no greater folly than to select a wife for mere personal beauty alone. Beauty will always have its attractions; and when connected with an amiable disposition and useful qualifications, its influence cannot be objected to. But when unaccompanied with these characteristics, its power is to be resisted, and the heart steeled against all its fascinations. The young man who permits himself to fall so desperately in love with a lady, on account of mere personal beauty, as to marry her, despite the counsel of his friends, and when he himself sees, or might see,



a sad want of other and more valuable qualifications, commits an error, the wretched effects of which will be experienced through life. When this outward beauty loses its charm and passes away, as it will in a brief space of time, what has he left? A cross-grained, ill-natured, fault-finding, petulant, selfish wife, who will prove a "thorn in his side," during all his days, rather than a loving and valuable companion.

Good looks are always attractive. But there is something still more desirable in a wife, viz., a sweet disposition and an even temper, a gentle, affectionate heart, and a well-cultivated and enlightened mind. Let young men, by all means, seek for such qualifications in those whom they would choose for their companions. In these characteristics there is a beauty and loveliness which will not fade away with the consummation of marriage; but they will grow brighter and more attractive from year to year, during all life.

Moreover, I would caution young men against allowing their hearts to be taken



captive under circumstances where they are especially exposed to deception. A young woman may exhibit a fine appearance in a ball-room—may be very attractive at a party, and cut a fashionable and dashing figure in the public streets, and still make a poor, good-for-nothing wife. These are the last places in which choice should be made of a companion, to render aid and comfort amid the struggles of life. Whenever your attention is attracted by a young lady, study her in the family circle—learn her domestic qualifications. Is she a respectful, dutiful, loving daughter? Is she a kind and affectionate sister? Does she manifest a noble, generous, friendly spirit? Does she exhibit delicacy, refinement, and purity in her tastes and manners? Is she industrious, economical, and frugal in her habits? Will she be likely to assist you in husbanding your income, and taking care of your earnings? Is she thoroughly versed in all domestic affairs, so that she herself could do all things connected with household matters, should necessity require it?



These, I acknowledge, are very ordinary, very homely inquiries; but nevertheless they are of the highest importance. A young man who will marry, without having thoroughly made all such investigations, and becoming satisfied that his intended is not deficient, to any great extent, in these qualifications, is blind to his own highest good, and will in long after-years, amid domestic inquietude, and family troubles, indulge unavailing regrets at his blindness and folly. But whenever a young woman can be found, possessing these invaluable characteristics, I would advise the youth seeking for a companion, to win her for a wife if possible. Although she may be plain in person, and poor in property, yet she will be of more worth than rubies; and all riches cannot be compared with her. She will be a faithful friend and wise counsellor, and will smooth the rugged pathway of life. However the world and its affairs may go without, he who has such a wife, will ever have a home, where neatness and comfort, peace and love, and all that can



yield contentment and enjoyment, will smile upon him!

All the care, discrimination, and judgment urged on young men in selecting wives, I would commend to young ladies, in accepting husbands. If to the former, marriage is an important event, fraught with consequences lasting as life, it is peculiarly so to the latter. It surely is no trivial event for a daughter to leave the home of her childhood, the tender care and watchful guardianship of kind parents, the society of affectionate brothers and sisters, to confide herself, with all her interests and her happiness, to another with whom she has hitherto associated only as a friend. Is it not necessary to exercise prudence, forethought, discretion, in taking a step so momentous?

A young woman should not marry because the youthful are expected to enter matrimonial bonds at a certain age, nor merely because they have had an offer of marriage. Such an admonition may seem to be unnecessary; but I think it called for. It is true,



beyond question, that young women sometimes receive the addresses, and finally become the wives, of men for whom they have formed no very strong attachment, and, indeed, in whom they see many characteristics and habits, which they cannot approve. This is done on the principle, that it is the first offer of marriage they have had, and may be the only opportunity of settlement for life that will ever present itself. Not a few parents have urged their daughters to such a course—totally blinded to the evils which often flow from it.

Such a procedure is fraught with danger. It perils the happiness of all coming days. How many have, under such circumstances, left the abode of their childhood, where every comfort surrounded them, to spend a life of wrangling, bitterness, and, sometimes, abject poverty. Better, a thousand times, to remain at home, better live in "single blessedness" all your days, than to become connected with a man whose disposition, habits, or character, you cannot fully approve.



Though he may be as rich as Cresus—though he may lead you to a palace for an abode, and deck you with jewels—yet, if you cannot give him your entire approbation, if your heart's fondest affections are not centred upon him, if he is not all you can sanction and love, unite not your destiny with him. The life of a contented, useful "old maid" is infinitely to be preferred to that of a wretched, heart-broken wife. "Those unequal marriages which are sometimes called *excellent matches*, seldom produce much happiness. And where happiness is not, what *is* all the rest?"

In accepting the addresses of young men, with a view to matrimony, allow me to caution you against being too much influenced by good looks and fascinating manners. It is due to young ladies to say, that they show much more good sense in this respect than the other sex. They do not select their companions so much on the ground of mere personal beauty, without reference to higher and better qualifications, as do young



men. Still, a precaution to them on this point will not be wholly useless.

Here is a young man who is gay in his manners, and fashionable in his attire—a dandy of the first water, all buckled and strapped after the latest pattern. His bosom is decked with golden chains, and his fingers with platter rings. His tongue is as prolific of lackadaisical words, as his head is devoid of good sense. He showers the politest attentions in the assembly room, or during the ride, or walk. He is, in fine, the very beau ideal of a “ladies’ man!” There is another young man. His manners are respectful, but without courtly polish. His dress is plain and neat, with no display and no gaudy ornaments. He knows nothing of the thousand ways and arts by which the other makes himself so agreeable. He has no “small talk” in his vocabulary, and must utter sound sense, on useful subjects, or remain silent. He may appear somewhat awkward in his attentions to ladies, but is, nevertheless, friendly and obliging in his demeanor. In



his whole life and character, he is a retiring, but most worthy youth. Are there not some young ladies who would prefer the company of the showy, chattering fop; who would receive his address, yea, accept him as a husband, and reject the diffident, modest youth? Yet the latter would make a kind, affectionate, provident husband; likely to attain to respectability, high-standing, and wealth: while the former would most probably prove a poor, cross-grained broken-stick; ill-natured, and perhaps dissipated; dragging wife and family into the insignificance and poverty to which he speedily would sink! Surely discreet young ladies will think many times, and weigh well the consequences, before making such a choice.

Where the hand of a young woman is sought in marriage, she should look beyond the mere personal accomplishments of dress, manners, and conversational powers of him who would make her his wife. Many an individual who has the appearance and manners of a gentleman, is, in reality, a black-hearted villain—



a marriage with whom would seal their wretchedness for life. In accepting a husband, there are certain requisites which young women should consider as indispensable.

He should have some honest and useful trade, profession, or occupation. A "do-nothing" young man, will assuredly make a "good-for-nothing" husband. No one can justly charge you with sordid motives, for scrutinizing critically his capability to secure to you, and such family as may gather around you, a maintenance that shall insure you against poverty and want.

His habits should be unexceptionable. He should be honest, upright, truthful, industrious, and economical—pure in his conversation and tastes. Not only should he have the ability to obtain a livelihood, but should possess prudence and frugality to lay up and secure the fruits of his industry.

Above all, he should be strictly and rigidly *temperate*. On this point I would speak with emphasis. Most earnestly would I



admonish young women never to unite their destiny with that of a drinking young man. Alas! how many a wife, when too late, has lamented in bitter tears her short-sightedness in this respect. A young man, who, in this age of temperance, has not sufficient self-respect, pride of character, and good sense, to refrain from the intoxicating bowl before marriage, will be very likely to sink into a common drunkard afterwards. This is not always the case; but the exceptions are so rare, that she who ventures the risk, places herself in a condition which hazards her happiness for life. However proper his other habits may be, however amiable and pleasant his disposition, however bright and promising his prospects, however high his position, or respectable his family connections—if he drinks the lethean draught, even but sparingly, he is tampering with a viper, which will almost certainly sting him to death, and poison the joys, and destroy the prosperity of all connected with him.

The world is filled with scenes which attest



the need of this admonition. All around we behold the wrecks of families, torn asunder by the intemperance of husbands and fathers, which otherwise might have been united and happy. Wives forsaken, broken-hearted, impoverished—children beggared and neglected, growing up in rags and ignorance, to become the victims of sin and shame. All these attest the danger that woman encounters, who links her destiny with a drinking young man. O ye youthful and inexperienced, turn not a cold ear to my exhortation. With all the solemnity the momentous topic inspires, I beseech you, as you value a life of peace and prosperity, never, under any possible consideration, give your hand to a man who presses to his lips the intoxicating cup! Though you may have granted your affections, and plighted your troth, to one who is given, even but slightly, to this practice, if on your earnest expostulation, he will not abandon it, you should, without hesitation, break all connection with him. Every consideration of prudence, self-respect, and safety, urges you



to such a step, however painful; and every law, human and divine, will justify you in adopting it.

The suggestions which follow, on the views of Marriage that should be entertained by young men, and "Female qualifications for Marriage," are so appropriate and excellent, that I cannot forbear giving them an insertion in these pages.

"Whatever advice may be given to the contrary by friends or foes, it is my opinion that you ought to keep matrimony steadily in view. For this end, were it for no other, you ought to mingle much in society. Never consider yourself complete without this other half of yourself. It is too much the fashion among young men at the present day to make up their minds to dispense with marriage;—an unnatural, and therefore an unwise plan. Much of our character, and most of our comfort and happiness depend upon it. Many have found this out too late; that is, after age and fixed habits had partly disqualified them for this important duty.



“According to the character of the person you select, in a considerable degree, will be your own. Should a mere face fascinate you to a *doll*, you will not need much mental energy to please her; and the necessity of exertion on this account being small, your own self will sink, or at least not rise, as it otherwise might do.

“But were I personally acquainted with you, and should I perceive an *honorable* attachment taking possession of your heart, I should regard it as a happy circumstance. Life then has an object. The only thing to be observed is that it be managed with prudence, honor, and good sense.

“The case of John Newton is precisely in point. In very early life this man formed a strong attachment to a lady, under circumstances which did not permit him to make it known; which was probably well for both parties. It did not diminish *her* happiness, so long as she remained in ignorance on the subject; and in scenes of sorrow, suffering, and temptation, the hope of one day obtain-



ing her soothed him, and kept him from performing many dishonorable actions. 'The bare possibility,' he says, 'of seeing her again, was the only obvious means of restraining me from the most horrid designs, against myself and others.'

"The wish to marry, if *prudently* indulged, will lead to honest and persevering exertions to obtain a reasonable income—one which will be satisfactory to the object of your hopes, as well as to her friends. He who is determined on living a single life, very naturally contracts his endeavors to his own narrow personal wants, or else squanders freely, in the belief that he can always procure enough to support himself. Indeed it cannot have escaped even the careless observer that in proportion as an individual relinquishes the idea of matrimony, just in the same proportion do his mind and feelings contract. On the contrary, that hope which aims at a beloved partner—a family—a fireside,—will lead its possessor to activity in all his conduct. It will elicit his talents, and urge



them to their full energy, and probably call in the aid of economy; a quality so indispensable to every condition of life. The single consideration, 'What would she think were she now to see me?' called up by the obtrusion of a favorite image,—how often has it stimulated a noble mind and heart to deeds which otherwise had never been performed!

"I repeat it, I am aware that this advice is liable to abuse. But what shall be done? Images of some sort will haunt the mind more or less—female influence in some shape or other will operate. Is it not better to give the imagination a virtuous direction than to leave it to range without control, and without *end*?

"I repeat it, nothing is better calculated to preserve a young man from the contamination of low pleasures and pursuits, than frequent intercourse with the more refined and virtuous of the other sex. Besides, without such society his manners can never acquire the true polish of a gentleman,—gene-



ral character, dignity, and refinement;—nor his mind and heart the truest and noblest sentiments of a man. Make it an object then, I again say, to spend some portion of every week of your life in the company of intelligent and virtuous ladies. At all events, flee solitude, and especially the exclusive society of your own sex. The doctrines even of Zimmerman, the great apostle of solitude, would put to shame many young men, who seldom or never mix in female society.

“If you should be so unfortunate as not to have among your acquaintance any ladies whose society would, in these points of view, be profitable to you, do not be in haste to mix with the ignorant and vulgar; but wait patiently till your own industry and good conduct shall give you admission to better circles; and in the meantime cultivate your mind by reading and thinking, so that when you actually gain admission to good society, you may know how to prize and enjoy it. Remember, too, that you are not to be so selfish as to think nothing of contributing to



the happiness of others. It is blessed to *give* as well as to *receive*.

“When you are in the company of ladies, beware of silliness. It is true they will sooner forgive foolishness than ill manners, but you will, of course, avoid both. I know one young gentleman of great promise, who adopted the opinion that in order to qualify himself for female society, he had only to become as foolish as possible, while in their presence. That young man soon lost the favor of all whose friendship might have operated as a restraint; but unwilling to associate with the despicable, and unable to live in absolute solitude, he chose the bottle for his companion; and made himself, and the few friends he had, miserable.

“Nothing, unless it be the coarsest flattery, will give more offence, in the end, than to treat ladies as mere playthings or children. On the other hand, do not become pedantic, and lecture them on difficult subjects. They readily see through all this. Neither is it good manners or policy to talk much of your-



self. They can penetrate this also ; and they despise the vanity which produces it. In detecting deception, they are often much quicker than we apprehend.

“ A young gentleman, in one of the New England States, who had assumed the chair of the pedagogue, paid his addresses to the beautiful and sensible daughter of a respectable farmer. One day, as she was present in his school, he read to her a hymn, which he said was from his own pen. Now it was obvious to this lady, and even to some of the pupils, that the hymn was none other than that usually known by the name of the ‘Harvest Hymn,’ modified by the change of a few words only. How much effect this circumstance might have had I cannot say with certainty ; but I know it disgusted *one*, at least, of the pupils ; and I know, too, that his addresses to the lady were soon afterwards discontinued.

“ A young man who would profit from the society of young ladies, or indeed from any society, must preserve a modest and respect-



ful spirit ; must seek to conciliate their good will by quiet and unostentatious attentions, and discover more willingness to avail himself of their stock of information, than to display his own knowledge or abilities.

“He should observe, and learn to admire, that purity and ignorance of evil, which is the characteristic of well-educated young ladies, and which, while we are near them, raises us above those sordid and sensual considerations which hold such sway over *men*, in their intercourse with each other. He should treat them as spirits of a purer sphere, and try to be as innocent, if not as ignorant of evil as they are ; remembering that there is no better way of raising himself in the scale of intellectual and moral being. But to whatever degree of intimacy he may arrive, he should never forget those little acts of courtesy and kindness, as well as that respect, and self-denial, which lend a charm to every kind of polite intercourse, and especially to that of which I am now speaking.

“Whenever an opportunity occurs, how-



ever, it is the duty of a young man to introduce topics of conversation which are decidedly favorable to mental and moral improvement. Should he happen to be attending to the same study, or reading the same book with a female acquaintance, an excellent opportunity will be afforded for putting this rule in practice.

#### FEMALE QUALIFICATIONS FOR MARRIAGE.

“The highest as well as the noblest trait in female character, is love to God. When we consider what are the tendencies of Christianity to elevate woman from the state of degradation to which she had, for ages, been subjected—when we consider not only what it has done, but what it is destined yet to do for her advancement,—it is impossible not to shrink from the presence of an impious, and above all an unprincipled atheistical female, as from an ungrateful and unnatural being.

“Man is under eternal obligations to Christianity and its Divine Author, undoubtedly; but woman seems to be more so.



“That charge against females which in the minds of some half-atheistical men is magnified into a stigma on Christianity itself, namely, that they are more apt to become religious than men; and that we find by far the greater part of professing Christians to be females, is in my own view one of the highest praises of the sex. I rejoice that their hearts are more susceptible than ours, and that they do not war so strongly against that religion which their nature demands. I have met with but one female, whom I knew to be an avowed atheist.

“Indeed there are very few men to be found, who are skeptical themselves, who do not prefer pious companions of the other sex. I will not stop to adduce this as an evidence of the truth of our religion itself, and of its adaptation to the wants of the human race, for happily it does not need it. Christianity is based on the most abundant evidence, of a character wholly unquestionable. But this I do and will say, that to be consistent, young men of loose principles ought not to rail at



females for their piety, and then whenever they seek for a constant friend, one whom they can love,—for they never really love the abandoned—always prefer, other things being equal, the society of the pious and the virtuous.

“Next on the list of particular qualifications in a female, for matrimonial life, I place COMMON SENSE. In the view of some, it ought to precede moral excellence. A person, it is said, who is deficient in common sense, is, in proportion to the imbecility, unfit for *social* life, and yet the same person might possess a kind of negative excellency, or perhaps even a species of piety. This view appears to me, however, much more specious than sound.

“By *common sense*, as used in this place, I mean the faculty by means of which we see things *as they* really are. It implies judgment and discrimination, and a proper sense of propriety in regard to the common concerns of life. It leads us to form judicious plans of action, and to be governed by our circumstances in such a way as will be gene-



rally approved. It is the exercise of reason, uninfluenced by passion or prejudice. To man, it is nearly what instinct is to brutes. It is very different from genius or talent, as they are commonly defined ; but much better than either. It never blazes forth with the splendor of noon, but shines with a constant and useful light. To the housewife—but, above all, to the mother,—it is indispensable.

“Whatever other recommendations a lady may possess, she should have an inextinguishable thirst for improvement. No sensible person can be truly happy in the world, without this ; much less qualified to make others happy. But the genuine spirit of improvement, wherever it exists, atones for the absence of many qualities which would otherwise be indispensable : in this respect resembling that ‘charity’ which covers ‘a multitude of sins.’ Without it, almost everything would be of little consequence,—with it, everything else is rendered doubly valuable.

“One would think that every sensible person, of either sex, would aspire at improve-



ment, were it merely to avoid the shame of being stationary like the brutes. Above all, it is most surprising that any lady should be satisfied to pass a day or even an hour without mental and moral progress. It is no discredit to the lower animals that—‘their little all flows in at once,’ that ‘in ages they no more can know, or covet or enjoy,’ for this is the legitimate result of the physical constitution which God has given them. But it is far otherwise with the masters and mistresses of creation ; for

‘Were man to live coeval with the sun,  
The patriarch pupil *should* be learning still,  
And dying, leave his lessons half unlearnt.’

“There are,—I am sorry to say it—not a few of both sexes who never appear to breathe out one hearty desire to rise, intellectually or morally, with a view to the government of themselves or others. They love themselves supremely—their friends subordinately—their neighbors, perhaps not at all. But neither the love they bear to themselves or others even leads them to a single series



of any sort of action which has for its ultimate object the improvement of anything higher than the condition of the mere animal. Dress, personal appearance, equipage, style of a dwelling or its furniture, with no other view, however, than the promotion of mere physical enjoyment, is the height of their desires for improvement!

“Talk to them of elevating the intellect or improving the heart, and they admit it is true; but they go their way and pursue their accustomed round of folly again. The probability is, that though they assent to your views, they do not understand you. It requires a stretch of charity to which I am wholly unequal, to believe that beings who ever conceived, for one short moment, of the height to which their natures may be elevated, should sink back without a single struggle, to a mere selfish, unsocial, animal life;—to lying in bed ten or twelve hours daily, rising three or four hours later than the sun, spending the morning in preparation at the glass, the remainder of the time till



dinner in unmeaning calls, the afternoon in yawning over a novel, and the evening in the excitement of the tea-table and the party, and the ball-room, to retire, perhaps at midnight, with the mind and body and soul in a feverish state, to toss away the night in vapid or distressing dreams.

“How beings endowed with immortal souls can be contented to while away precious hours in a manner so useless, and withal so displeasing to the God who gave them their time for the improvement of themselves and others, is to me absolutely inconceivable! Yet it is certainly done; and that not merely by a few solitary individuals scattered up and down the land; but in some of our most populous cities, by considerable numbers.

“Should the young man who is seeking an ‘help meet,’ chance to fall in with such *beings* as these—and some we fear there are in almost every part of our land,—let him shun them as he would the ‘choke damp’ of the cavern.

“Their society would extinguish, rather



than fan the flame of every generous or benevolent-feeling that might be kindling in his bosom. *With* the fond, the ardent, the never-failing desire to improve, physically, intellectually, and morally, there are few females who may not make tolerable companions for a man of sense;—*without* it, though a young lady were beautiful and otherwise lovely beyond comparison, wealthy as the Indies, surrounded by thousands of the most worthy friends, and even talented, let him beware! Better remain in celibacy a thousand years (could life last so long) great as the evil may be, than form a union with such an object. He should pity, and seek her reformation, if not beyond the bounds of possibility; but love her he should not! The penalty will be absolutely insupportable.

“One point ought to be settled,—I think unalterably settled—before matrimony. It ought indeed to be settled in early life, but it is better late, perhaps, than never. Each of the parties should consider themselves as sacredly pledged, in all cases, to yield to con-



viction. . I have no good opinion of the man who expects his wife to yield her opinion to his, on every occasion, unless she is convinced. I say on *every occasion*; for that she sometimes ought to do so, seems to be both scriptural and rational. It would be very inconvenient to call in a third person as an umpire upon every slight difference of opinion between a young couple, besides being very humiliating. But if each maintain, with pertinacity, their opinion, what can be done? It does seem to me that every sensible woman, who feels any good degree of confidence in her husband, will perceive the propriety of yielding her opinion to his in such cases, where the matter is of such a nature that it cannot be delayed.

“ But there are a thousand things occurring, in which there is no necessity of forming an immediate opinion, or decision, except from conviction. I should never like the idea of a woman’s conforming to her husband’s views to please him, merely, without considering whether they are correct or not.



It seems to me a sort of treason against the God who gave her a mind of her own, with an intention that she should use it. But it would be higher treason still, in male or female, not to yield, when actually convinced.

“Without the knowledge and the love of domestic concerns, even the wife of a peer is but a poor affair. It was the fashion, in former times, for ladies to understand a great deal about these things, and it would be very hard to make me believe that it did not tend to promote the interests and honor of their husbands.

“The concerns of a great family never can be *well* managed, if left *wholly* to hirelings ; and there are many parts of these affairs in which it would be unseemly for husbands to meddle. Surely, no lady can be too high in rank to make it proper for her to be well acquainted with the character and general demeanor of all the female servants. To receive and give character is too much to be left to a servant, however good, whose service has been ever so long, or acceptable.



“Much of the ease and happiness of the great and rich must depend on the character of those by whom they are assisted. They live under the same roof with them; they are frequently the children of their tenants, or poorer neighbors; the conduct of their whole lives must be influenced by the examples and precepts which they here imbibe; and when ladies consider how much more weight there must be in one word from them, than in ten thousand words from a person who, call her what you like, is still a *fellow servant*, it does appear strange that they should forego the performance of this at once important and pleasing part of their duty.

“I am, however, addressing myself, in this work, to persons in the middle ranks of life; and here a knowledge of domestic affairs is so necessary in every wife, that the lover ought to have it continually in his eye. Not only a knowledge of these affairs—not only to know how things *ought to be done*, but how to *do them*; not only to know what ingredients ought to be put into a pie or a



pudding, but to be able *to make* the pie or the pudding.

“Young people, when they come together, ought not, unless they have fortunes, or are to do unusual business, to think about *servants* ! Servants for what ! To help them eat, and drink, and sleep ? When they have children, there must be some *help* in a farmer’s or tradesman’s house, but until then, what call is there for a servant in a house, the master of which has to *earn* every mouthful that is consumed ?

“Eating and drinking come *three times every day* ; they must come ; and, however little we may, in the days of our health and vigor, care about choice food and about cookery, we very soon get *tired* of heavy or burnt bread, and of spoiled joints of meat. We bear them for once or twice perhaps ; but about the third time, we begin to lament ; about the fifth time, it must be an extraordinary affair that will keep us from complaining ; if the like continue for a month or two, we begin to *repent* ; and then adieu to



all our anticipated delights. We discover, when it is too late, that we have not got a help-mate, but a burden ; and, the fire of love being damped, the unfortunately educated creature, whose parents are more to blame than she is, unless she resolve to learn her duty, is doomed to lead a life very nearly approaching to that of misery ; for, however considerate the husband, he never can esteem her as he would have done, had she been skilled in domestic affairs.

“The mere *manual* performance of domestic labors is not, indeed, absolutely necessary in the female head of the family of professional men ; but, even here, and also in the case of great merchants and of gentlemen living on their fortunes, surely the head of the household ought to be able to give directions as to the purchasing of meal, salting meat, making bread, making preserves of all sorts ; and ought to see the things done.

“The lady ought to take care that food be well cooked ; that there be always a sufficient supply ; that there be good living with-



out waste ; and that in her department, nothing shall be seen inconsistent with the rank, station, and character of her husband. If he have a skilful and industrious wife, he will, unless he be of a singularly foolish turn, gladly leave all these things to her absolute dominion, controlled only by the extent of the whole expenditure, of which he must be the best judge.

“ But, in a farmer’s or a tradesman’s family, the manual performance is absolutely necessary, whether there be domestics or not. No one knows how to teach another so well as one who has done, and can do, the thing himself. It was said of a famous French commander, that, in attacking an enemy, he did not say to his men ‘*go on,*’ but ‘*come on,*’ and, whoever has well observed the movements of domestics, must know what a prodigious difference there is in the effect of the words, *go* and *come*.

“ A very good rule would be, to have nothing to eat, in a farmer’s or mechanic’s house, that the mistress did not know how to pre-



pare and to cook; no pudding, tart, pie or cake, that she did not know how to make. Never fear the toil to her: exercise is good for health; and without health there is no beauty. Besides, what is the labor in such a case? And how many thousands of ladies, who idle away the day, would give half their fortunes for that sound sleep which the stirring housewife seldom fails to enjoy.

“Yet, if a young farmer or mechanic *marry* a girl, who has been brought up only to ‘*play music*,’ to *draw*, to *sing*, to waste paper, pen and ink in writing long and half-romantic letters, and to see shows, and plays, and read novels;—if a young man do marry such an unfortunate young creature, let him bear the consequences with temper. Let him be *just*. Justice will teach him to treat her with great indulgence; to endeavor to persuade her to learn her business as a wife; to be patient with her; to reflect that he has taken her, being apprized of her inability; to bear in mind, that he was, or seemed to be, pleased with her showy and useless acquirements;



and that, when the gratification of his passion has been accomplished, he is unjust, and cruel, and unmanly, if he turn round upon her, and accuse her of a want of that knowledge, which he well knew, beforehand, she did not possess.

“For my part, I do not know, nor can I form an idea of, a more unfortunate being than a girl with a mere boarding-school education, and without a fortune to enable her to keep domestics, when married. Of what *use* are *her* accomplishments? Of what use her music, her drawing, and her romantic epistles? If she should chance to possess a sweet disposition, and good nature, the first faint cry of her first babe drives all the tunes and all the landscapes, and all the imaginary beings out of her head forever.

“The farmer or the tradesman’s wife has to *help earn* a provision for her children; or, at the least, to help to earn a store for sickness or old age. She ought, therefore, to be qualified to begin, at once, to assist her husband in his earnings. The way in which she



can most efficiently assist, is by taking care of his property ; by expending his money to the greatest advantage ; by wasting nothing, but by making the table sufficiently abundant with the least expense.

“ But how is she to do these things, unless she has been *brought up* to understand domestic affairs ? How is she to do these things, if she has been taught to think these matters beneath her study ? How is the man to expect her to do these things, if she has been so bred, as to make her habitually look upon them as worthy the attention of none but low and ignorant women ?

“ *Ignorant*, indeed ! Ignorance consists in a want of knowledge of those things which your calling or state of life naturally supposes you to understand. A ploughman is not an ignorant man because he does not know how to read. If he knows how to plough, he is not to be called an ignorant man ; but a wife may be justly called an ignorant woman, if she does not know how to provide a dinner for her husband. It is cold comfort for a



hungry man, to tell him how delightfully his wife plays and sings. *Lovers* may live on very aerial diet, but husbands stand in need of something more solid ; and young women may take my word for it, that a constantly clean table, well cooked victuals, a house in order, and a cheerful fire, will do more towards preserving a husband's heart, than all the 'accomplishments' taught in all the 'establishments' in the world without them."\*

Other considerations might be urged on the young of both sexes, as prerequisites to a hopeful and a happy marriage. But if the reflections already offered are duly heeded, they will enable those who are influenced by them, to secure the blessings and escape the evils of the marriage state. As a general remark, I would suggest that in selecting a companion for a connection so lasting, it should be a leading object to find as great a similarity of opinions, habits, tastes, and feelings, as possible. This is especially important in regard to religious sentiments. It

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\* Young Man's Guide.



is a serious misfortune for a young married couple to find themselves differing materially on the subject of religion. This is more particularly an evil when both are strongly attached to their respective opinions, and anxious to attend different churches. I have frequently known this greatly to embitter the cup of domestic enjoyment. Where husband and wife can sympathize in each other's sentiments—can walk together to the house of God, with their children—can strengthen and enlighten one another in regard to the great truths to which they there listen—can unite in instructing their family in the same doctrines and principles of Christianity—it opens one of the highest and sweetest sources of domestic happiness. But an absence of this unity in religious opinions, is liable to lead to frequent disputations and contentions, which often result in recriminations, and hard and bitter feelings. There are not wanting instances where the most serious difficulties and the greatest unhappiness have grown out of these disagreements.



Hence it is both proper and needful, to admonish the young, in choosing a wife or a husband, to make a concurrence in religious faith, one of the great essentials requisite to a union.

In case of a different result—when husband and wife unfortunately find a wide disparity in the leading doctrines of their religion—they should seek to make the best of their misfortune, and guard against allowing it to prove a bone of contention in their midst. They should agree to disagree in forbearance and love. They should respect each other's views, and be cautious not to say or do that which can cast disparagement on their respective sentiments. Neither should demand or expect the other to abandon his or her doctrines, without full conviction of their erroneous nature. Both should be tolerant and forbearing—willing to grant the other the same freedom of opinion they claim for themselves.

It should be an established rule with husband and wife, to attend the worship of



God together. This is by far the most agreeable and proper procedure. Should it not be pleasant, however, for both to worship statedly in the same church, and listen to the proclamation of the same doctrines, they should arrange their plans to attend each other's meetings on alternate Sabbaths. This kind and friendly reciprocity would be fair, just, and honorable to both parties, and might lead ultimately to a similarity of opinions. But for a husband or a wife to refuse such a concession, and insist that the other shall forsake their attached place of worship, abandon their sentiments, or remain totally silent in relation to them, on pain of having the harmony and peace of the family destroyed—would be to exhibit a spirit totally ungenerous, and in violation of every dictate of the Christian religion.

I have made these suggestions, not only for the benefit of those who have recently entered upon married life, but to admonish those who are unmarried to come to an understanding on this subject, and make all



these arrangements before the consummation of their vows. . Or, what is still better, let these considerations convince the youthful of the necessity of making a similarity of religious sentiment one of the chief qualifications in forming a tie, which, for good or evil, will connect them with another during the remainder of the earthly journey.

THE END.



THE LIFE OF JAMES OGLETHORPE

James Oglethorpe, the founder of the Georgia colony, was born in 1696 in England. He was a member of the Society of Friends, and was educated at the Quaker school in London. He was a successful merchant and a public spirited man. He was one of the first to see the need of a colony in the South, and he was the first to establish it. He was a man of great energy and vision, and he was a man of great courage and determination. He was a man who was not afraid to stand up for his principles, and he was a man who was not afraid to take risks. He was a man who was not afraid to die for his country, and he was a man who was not afraid to live for his country.

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**The Life of John Quincy Adams**, Sixth President of the United States, by Hon. Wm. H. Seward, U. S. S., with a portrait on steel, 12mo. muslin, gilt backs.

\* \* 20,000 copies of this popular work have been sold by agents, in the short space of eight months.

There is, indeed, so much to admire throughout the whole work, that were we to enter into anything like an elaborate review, it would require more space than we can spare. \* \* \* The Life and Public Services of such

a man as John Quincy Adams, furnish the very material for such a pen as Gov. Seward's, and we find evidences of his own brilliant intellect impressed upon almost every page and sentence. Preserving the connection of events with almost mathematical nicety, at the same time avoiding everything tedious and prolix. As a writer, it may be doubted whether Gov. Seward has any superiors. \* \*  
— *Philadelphia News*, (*Whig*.)

It would be a task of no ordinary difficulty for a contemporary, one who has mingled in the strife and arena of his times, to write an impartial Life of so peculiar and prominent an actor (for half a century) as Mr. Adams. \* \* Gov. Seward has attempted it, and succeeded in producing an interesting work, characterized by ability and eloquence. \* \* We consider it worthy of public attention.— *Albany Argus*, (*Dem.*)

We have read this volume with great satisfaction, and hasten to express our thanks to the author; not merely for the pleasures afforded us, but for the services rendered humanity. \* \* \* — *Louisville Examiner*,  
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MISS CONKLING, who is a daughter of Judge Conkling of Auburn, is favorably known as the author of Harper's translation of "Florian's History of the Moors of Spain." She also wrote "Isabel, or the Trials of the Heart." In the preparation of the pretty little volume she has done a praiseworthy deed, and we hope she will receive the reward she merits. She has taught us in the work

"how divine a thing  
A woman may be made."

The mother and wife of Washington were, in many respects, model women, and the daughters of America will do well to study their character—which is finely drawn on these pages.—*Literary Messenger*.

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This acceptable and well written volume goes forth upon a happy mission,

"To teach us how divine a thing  
A woman may be made,"

by unfolding those charms of character which belong to the mother and wife of the hero of the Land of the Free; and in the companionship of which, while they illustrated the watchful tenderness of a mother, and the confiding affections of a wife, is shown those influences which made up the moral sentiments of a man, whose moral grandeur will be felt in all that is future in government or divine in philosophy; and one whose name is adored by all nations, as the leader of man in the progress of government, to that perfection of human rights where all enjoy liberty and equality. To say that Miss Conkling has fulfilled the task she says a "too partial friendship has assigned her" faultlessly, would perhaps be too unmeasured praise, for perfection is seldom attained; but it will not be denied but that her biographies are traced in the chaste elegances that belong to the finished periods of a refined style, which fascinates the reader with what she has thus contributed to our national literature.

The design of the volume is, to picture a mother fitting the "Father of his Country" in a light full of the inexhaustible nobleness of woman's nature, and yet as possessing that subdued and quiet simplicity, where Truth becomes the Hope on which Faith looks at the future with a smile. The mother of Washington was tried in a school of practice where frugal habits and active industry were combined with the proverbial excellences of those Virginia matrons, who were worthy mothers of such men as Washington, Jefferson, Marshall, and Henry. Miss C. has pictured with fidelity and elegance, her views of this remarkable woman; not less beautifully has she sketched the character of Martha, the wife; following her from her brilliant manners as the Virginia belle, through the various phases of her life, she gives a rapid but comprehensive view of those characteristics which make up the quiet refinement of manners native to her, and which ever gave her the reputation of an accomplished wife and lady. And with peculiar delicacy Miss Conkling has portrayed the thousand virtues with which she embellished a home; her amiable disposition and winning manners made the happiest to the purest and best of all men fame has chosen for its noblest achievements.—*Syracuse Star*.



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\* \* *Lowell Republican, (Free Soil.)*

It is a work well written, prepared evidently with care, conveys an excellent idea of the life and services of that distinguished patriot and statesman. It is well adapted for popular reading, and comes within the means of every citizen. \* \* \* And possessing, as it does, a fund of historical and biographical information, of the most interesting description, it will be a desirable book for the library and a welcome companion to any man who cherishes a respect for the memory of Adams. \*

\* \* *Boston Journal.*

\* \* We have read it and are delighted with the good taste and discrimination with which facts and cotemporary events are brought in to show forth the noble and manly stand of John Quincy Adams. Next to our national pride, that we have such great and good men to adorn the pages of our history, we should glory in having authors like Wm. H. Seward, to chronicle their lives and their deeds. \*

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"'OLD ZACH!' 'OLD ZACH!' the war cry rattles  
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As rung 'OLD FRITZ' in Europe's battles  
When thus his host Great Frederick led."

*Literary World.*



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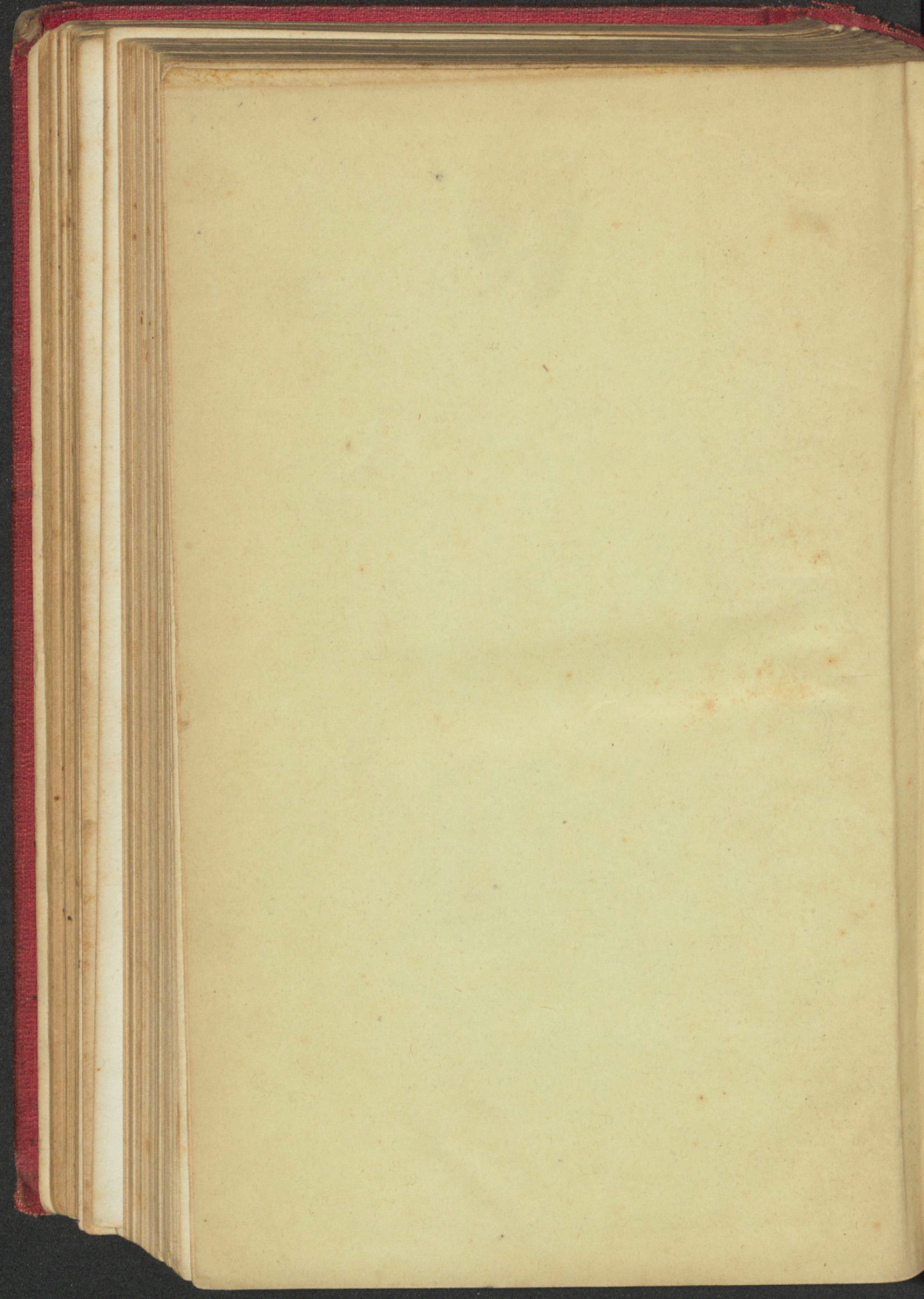
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